

CLAIMS

[1] An information notification apparatus comprising:

a rule holding unit operable to hold (a) an information notification rule which is generated based on information concerning a preference of a specific user, the rule defining that predetermined information should be notified to the specific user in the case where the specific user satisfies a predetermined condition and (b) an information notification rule which is generated based on information concerning a preference of another user; and

an information notification unit operable to notify the specific user of predetermined information which needs to be notified to the another user, in the case where a condition which is defined by the information notification rule concerning the another user is satisfied by the specific user.

[2] The information notification apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said rule holding unit is operable to hold at least one of the information notification rules in association with each of groups which is made up of users,

said information notification apparatus further comprises a group determination unit operable to manage information concerning each of the groups and operable to determine a group to which the specific user belongs, and

said information notification unit is operable to notify the specific user of the predetermined information in the case where a condition which is defined by one of the information notification rules is satisfied by the specific user, the rule being held in association with each of the determined groups.

[3] The information notification apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said information notification unit is operable to notify the predetermined information to only members of groups to which

each user belongs, the information being based on the information notification rule of each user.

5 [4] The information notification apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein the information concerning user's preference includes at least information indicating user's current position and preference,

10 said information notification apparatus further comprises a rule generation unit operable to generate the information notification rule based on inputted information which is necessary for generating an information notification rule based on information concerning user's preference, the necessary information being received through one of a dialogic input from a user and a communication network, and

15 said rule holding unit is operable to hold the respective information notification rules generated by the users, in association with one or more of the groups to which each user belongs.

20 [5] The information notification apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said information notification unit is operable to restrict the number of people to which information is notified to a predetermined number on a group-by-group basis, in the case where the number of users who satisfy a same condition at one time is plural.

25 [6] The information notification apparatus according to Claim 1, said apparatus further comprising a behavior determination unit operable to determine whether the user who received the notification has behaved in a manner indicated in the notified information, based on one of the followings:
30 an input received from a user; and data related to the notified information.

[7] An information notification method comprising:

a rule holding step of holding (a) an information notification rule which is generated based on information concerning a preference of a specific user, the rule defining that predetermined information should be notified to the specific user in the case where the specific user satisfies a predetermined condition and (b) an information notification rule which is generated based on information concerning a preference of another user; and

an information notification step of notifying the specific user of the predetermined information which the specific user should notify to the another user in the case where a condition which is defined by the information notification rule concerning the another user is satisfied by the specific user.

[8] A program causing a computer to execute:

a rule holding step of holding (a) an information notification rule which is generated based on information concerning a preference of a specific user, the rule defining that predetermined information should be notified to the specific user in the case where the specific user satisfies a predetermined condition and (b) an information notification rule which is generated based on information concerning a preference of another user; and

an information notification step of notifying the specific user of the predetermined information which the specific user should notify to the another user in the case where a condition which is defined by the information notification rule concerning the another user is satisfied by the specific user.